

FINAL RULE TO REDUCE TOXIC AIR POLLUTANTS FROM SURFACE COATING OF AUTOMOBILES AND LIGHT-DUTY TRUCKS

FACT SHEET

ACTION

- On February 26, 2004 the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued a final rule to reduce toxic air pollutant emissions from automobile and light-duty truck surface coating operations by 6,000 tons per year. Toxic air pollutants, also called air toxics, are those pollutants known or suspected to cause cancer or other serious health and environmental effects.
- The final rule applies to new and existing facilities that are a “major source” of air toxics or are part of a facility that is a “major source” of air toxics. A “major source” emits 10 tons per year or more of a single toxic air pollutant listed in the Clean Air Act or 25 tons per year or more of a combination of those pollutants.
- The surface coating of automobiles and light-duty trucks is a process of applying decorative, protective, or functional coatings to new automobile and light-duty truck bodies and body parts. Coating materials include, but are not limited to, primer, primer-surfacer, topcoat, sealer, sound deadener, and windshield primer and adhesive.
- The final rule will require facilities that are subject to the rule to limit air toxic emissions. Existing facilities will have up to three years from the date of publication of the final rule to comply with its requirements. New facilities must comply at startup or the date of publication of the final rule in the Federal Register, whichever is later.
- EPA is also amending its hazardous waste regulations to exempt certain activities covered by this final rule from the hazardous waste requirements. This will ensure compliance with emissions requirements without unfairly burdening the industry by controlling the same emissions under two rules.
- When proposing this rule, EPA requested comment on three options that could reduce the cost of complying with the final rule requirements. These options focused regulatory controls on facilities that pose significant human health risks from their toxic air emissions. Facilities that could show their air toxic emissions fall below certain thresholds could have been exempt from this air toxics rule if EPA adopted one or more of these options.
- EPA received comments on these risk-based approaches. After considering the complex issues raised and evaluating the effort required to finalize this rule by the court ordered deadline, EPA did not adopt any of these options in the final rule.

BENEFITS AND COST

- The final rule will reduce total emissions of air toxics by approximately 6,000 tons per year. This represents a 60 percent reduction from the estimated 1997 baseline.
- Many of these air toxics are also volatile organic compounds. These compounds contribute significantly to the formation of ground-level ozone, or smog, which has been shown to cause adverse effects on human health and to damage forests and crops.
- EPA expects implementation of the final rule to result in national costs of \$154 million per year for the entire industry. This represents less than one-tenth of one percent of baseline industry revenues and just over one percent of baseline industry pre-tax earnings. These costs take into account the implementation of pollution prevention activities, such as reformulation of coatings. They also include monitoring, recordkeeping, and reporting costs.

BACKGROUND

- Under the Clean Air Act, EPA is required to regulate emissions of 188 listed toxic air pollutants. The Act also requires EPA to identify industrial categories that emit one or more of these pollutants. The Act further requires EPA to develop emission standards requiring stringent air pollution reduction measures for each of the identified categories.
- EPA's published list of industry groups to be regulated includes surface coating of automobiles and light-duty trucks.
- Automobile and light-duty truck surface coating operations emit a number of toxic air pollutants including xylenes, toluene, ethyl benzene, ethylene glycol monobutyl ether, methyl ethyl ketone, and methyl isobutyl ketone. Health effects associated with these pollutants include irritation of the lung, skin, and mucous membranes; effects on the central nervous system; and damage to the liver.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

To download the standard from EPA's website on the Internet, go to "Recent Actions" at the following address:

<http://www.epa.gov/ttn/oarpg/ramain.html>.

For general information about the standards, contact Mr. Dave Salman of EPA's Office of Air Quality Planning and Standards, Emission Standards Division, Coatings and Consumer Products Group at (919) 541-0859, or by electronic mail at:

salman.dave@epa.gov. - Or visit the automobile and light-duty trucks (surface coating) website at: <http://www.epa.gov/ttn/atw/auto/autopg.html>.

The EPA's Office of Air and Radiation (OAR) homepage on the Internet contains a wide range of information on the air toxics program and many other air pollution programs and issues. The OAR's home page address is:

<http://www.epa.gov/oar/>.

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